

SHAYKH AL-SABUNI'S

Tafsir of Sura al-Mulk

TRANSLATED FROM

Safwat al-Tafasir

Tafsir excerpted from the most reliable books of tafsir
(Ibn Kathir, al-Razi, al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, Kashshaf, al-Alusi, Hashiya
al-Sawi, Abu Sa'ud and more)

Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni

Translation and notes by

RASHAD JAMEER

الله

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammad, the Mercy to creation, and upon his Family and Companions.

This is a translation of the tafsir (exegesis) of Sura al-Mulk, a prominent sura we should recite nightly, excerpted from the tafsir of Shaykh Muhammad al-Sabuni al-Halabi (Allah preserve and cure him) entitled *Safwat al-tafasir*.

While the majority of tafsir books employ only one style of tafsir, Shaykh al-Sabuni's novel work combines the two most prominent styles of tafsir, namely 'tafsir using narrations' (*tafsir bi 'l-ma'thur*)—which is often synonymous with *tafsir bi 'l-manqul*, and 'tafsir using reason' (*tafsir bi 'l-ma'qul*). Since its completion in 1978 CE (1398 AH), and with more depth than the renowned *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Safwat al-tafasir* has quickly become a celebrated tafsir for beginners

and a reliable reference point to learn the orthodox Sunni understanding of the Quran.

ABOUT THE PRESENT VOLUME

In addition to the meticulous referencing throughout this work, the list of *Abbreviations* cites the tafsirs referenced in this book chronologically. Dr. Mustafa Khattab's wonderful *Clear Quran* was employed for the translation of the Quranic verses while *Glimpses of Notable Tafsirs* presents a bird's eye view of the major *tafsirs* of the *umma*.

While larger books of tafsir have been translated into English, Muslims fail to read these beneficial books because they tend to be daunting reference works. Therefore, this tafsir series, which I have dubbed *The Famous Five Tafsir Series*, has been chosen for Muslims to learn about the famous suras of the Quran, from the most trusted sources of the *umma*, in a format that is succinct. It comprises Suras al-Waqi'a, al-Rahman, Yasin, al-Kahf, and now Sura al-Mulk (*alhamdulillah*), culminating with *Juz 'Amma* (*inshaAllah*)—and the *tawfiq* for this comes from Allah alone, as well as the supplications of my grandfather for me.

WASILA PRESS: CLASSICAL ISLAMIC BOOKS

Established in 2015 CE, Wasila Press is an independent Canadian publishing house with the mission of producing classical Islamic books for an English audience in high quality. The word *wasila* refers to a 'means,' and now more than ever, we firmly believe that knowledge of Allah and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) as recorded by the saintly scholars of Islam is the most potent

Translator's Preface

means Muslims can use to gain confidence, inspiration and the divine spirit needed to heal the diseases of the heart in the modern world. And what greater means is there for healing other than the Quran itself?

For some, the greatest *wasila* of getting close to Allah is the Quran, while for others, *Rasulullah* (Allah bless him and give him peace) is the greatest *wasila*. This bears no contradiction because, after all, he (Allah bless him and give him peace) was described as 'the walking Quran.' Meaning, he did not merely *deliver* Allah's Message, he *is* Allah's Message! So in that spirit, we say: The Messenger ﷺ is the Message!

O Allah! Open our hearts to have the desire to recite this blessed sura nightly, open our minds to the clear proofs in the sky, the birds, the earth, the stars, and the other natural phenomena mentioned in Sura al-Mulk that prove *there is no god but You! La illaha illa Anta!* We also confess our sins to You this instant, and ask You to grant us true reverence (*khashiya*) of You that enables us to avoid Your prohibitions and implement Your commands, by the rank of the walking Quran, Your Beloved Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), and his family, *amin!* In conclusion, I ask you to pray for everyone involved in this translation in any way—especially for the cure (*shifa*) of its author, Imam al-Sabuni, and the translator.

The needy servant of his Lord

RASHAD JAMEER

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Toronto, Ontario

BIOGRAPHY OF SHAYKH MUHAMMAD AL-SABUNI

SHAYKH MUHAMMAD 'ALI AL-SABUNI is one of the leading scholars of Islam (*Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a*) in the current era. A specialist in the knowledge of Quranic *tafsir*, he has authored one of the best and most widely accepted exegesis of the Qur'an in this era entitled *Safwat al-tafasir* (The Choicest Selections from the Books of Exegesis).

BACKGROUND

Born in the city of Aleppo, Syria in 1930 CE, his studies began early at the hands of his father, Shaykh Jamil al-Sabuni, who was one of the senior scholars in Aleppo city in his own right. He began memorizing the Quran (*hifz*) in a seminary (*madrasa*), and completed his *hifz* in secondary school. He learned the ancillary disciplines of the Arabic language, the knowledge of inheritance, and the other sciences of Islam from great scholars such as Shaykh Muhammad Najib Siraj, Shaykh Ahmad al-Shama', Shaykh Muhammad Sa'id and many others.

HIS STUDIES

He began his studies in the city of Aleppo at a School of Business where he studied for one year before becoming disinclined because of the school teaching students about *riba'* or usurious transactions. Despite obtaining excellent results, he left to pursue studies in the disciplines of the Sharia at the famed *Khasrawiyya School of Sharia* in Aleppo, and graduated in 1949 CE. Thereafter, the Syrian Ministry of Endowments sponsored him to study at Masjid al-Azhar in Cairo and he graduated from the Faculty of Sharia in 1952 CE. He then completed his specialization and further obtained a degree in Sharia Rulings (*Qada*) in 1954 CE.

HIS ACADEMIC LIFE

After completing his studies at al-Azhar, he returned to Syria to work as a professor in the Ministry of Islamic Culture in Aleppo, where he continued teaching until 1962 CE. Subsequently, he relocated to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to work on behalf of the Syrian Ministry of *Tarbiya* and Education as a lecturer for the Sharia College of Islamic Teachings and *Tarbiya* at Umm al-Qura University in Mecca al-Mukarrama and was tenured there for approximately thirty years. Following that, he worked as an academic researcher in the Centre for Academic Research and Reviving the Islamic Heritage. Thereafter, he worked in the Muslim World League as a counsellor for scientific research in the Quran and Sunna and remained there for a number of years.

The Shaykh has a voluminous and acute aptitude for knowledge. He had a daily class in Masjid al-Haram in

Mecca al-Mukarrama in which he would issue edicts (*fatwa*). Simultaneously, for close to eight years, he also held a weekly class in one of the mosques in the city of Jeddah, where he explained more than one-third of the Holy Quran to students of knowledge. These lessons were recorded on audio cassettes. In a similar fashion, the Shaykh has over 600 programs on the *Tafsir* of Quran recorded for television. The production for this project took over two years to complete and was finalized in the year 1998 CE.

A SELECTION OF HIS WRITTEN WORKS

1. *Safwat al-tafsir* (The Choicest of Exegesis) is his most famous book which combines two different types of exegesis, namely *tafsir ma'thur* and *manqul* extracted from the foremost *tafsirs*, namely *tafsirs Tabari, Kashshaf, Qurtubi, 'Alusi, Ibn Kathir, Bahr Muhit* and others in a simplified presentation (and this is the translation you hold in your hands).
2. *Al-Mawarith fi al-shari'a al-islami* (Inheritance in Islamic Law.)
3. *Rawa'i' al-bayan fi Tafsir ayat al-ahkam* (Enjoyable Elucidations Explaining the Verses of the Quran.)
4. *Qabs min nur al-Quran al-Karim* (A Firebrand of Light from the Holy Quran.)
5. *Al-Sunna al-nabawiyya qism min al-wahy al-ilahi al-munazzal* (The Prophetic Sunna: A Portion of Divine Revelation.)
6. *Mawsu'a al-fiqh al-shari' al-muyassar* (A Simplified Encyclopedia of Islamic Jurisprudence.)
7. *Al-Ziwaj al-islami al-mubakkir: sa'ada wa hisana* (An Early Islamic Marriage: Felicity and Chastity.)

8. *Tafsir al-wadih al-muyassir* (The Simplified and Clear Tafsir.)
9. *Al-Mahdi al-nabawi al-sahih fi salat al-tarawih* (Correct Prophetic Guidance regarding Tarawih Prayers.)
10. *Al-Nubuwwa wa al-anbiya'* (Prophethood and the Prophets.)
11. *Mawqif al-shari'a al-gharra' min nikah al-mut'ah* (The Resplendent Sharia's Stance on Temporary Marriage.)
12. *Al-Mahdi wa ashrat al-sa'ah* (The Mahdi and the Portents of the Hour.)
13. *Sharh riyad al-salihin* (Commentary on the Meadows of the Righteous.)
14. *Shubuhāt wa abatīl hawl ta'addud zawjat al-rasul* (Abstrusities and Calumnies around the Polygyny of the Prophet ﷺ.)
15. *Tibyan fi 'ulum al-Quran* (The Elucidation on the Sciences of the Quran.)
16. *Risala fi hukm taswir* (The Treatise on the Ruling of Photography.)
17. *Jarima al-riba akhtar al-jara'im al-diniyya wa al-ijtima'iyya* (The Crime of Usury is the Most Dangerous of Religious and Societal Crimes.)

At the time of this writing, the Shaykh is alive but has some ailments and is living in the Arabian Peninsula. May Allah continue to benefit us by him. *Amin!*

REVIEWS FOR SAFWAT AL-TAFASIR

SHAYKH 'ABDULLAH B. HUMAYD
(D. 1908 - 1991)

ALL PRAISE BE TO ALLAH ALONE. In compliance with the request of my noble brother—the Ustadh, the Shaykh, Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni, the Professor at the King Abdul Aziz University at the faculty of Islamic Studies—for me to write a review for his book *Safwat al-tafasir*, after he personally read some excerpts of it to me, with time not permitting me to listen to it in its entirety, I say:

The author has produced an excellent publication according to the sections that I have heard read from his book—may Allah reward him handsomely. He has undergone immense effort in compiling the most reliable and soundest opinions extracted from numerous books of tafsir. In this tafsir, he combines two types of tafsir: 1) 'tafsir by narration' (*tafsir bi 'l-ma'thur*, also known as *tafsir bi 'l-manqul*), and 2) 'tafsir using reason and logic' (*tafsir bi 'l-ma'qul*)—all in an exceptionally clear manner and with a novel and simple format.

He begins by mentioning an overview of the sura and its foundational themes, before explaining its vocabulary and relevant word derivations. He then goes on to cite the connections between the previous and upcoming verses, clarifying the reasons why certain verses were revealed (*asbab al-nuzul*). He then begins the tafsir of the verses, while avoiding the [often complex] points of declension (*'irab*). He mentions points of benefit related to the verses and lessons that can be drawn from them, then concludes by highlighting the Rhetorical Devices (*balagha*) used in the sura.

I ask Allah for enabling-grace (*tawfiq*) and accuracy to be bestowed upon us and him, to spread benefit by this book, and to reward the author for the great effort that he expended in compiling this book. Allah is the Bestower of Divine Grace—and may Allah bless Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions, and give them peace.

[Shaykh] 'Abdullah b. Humayd

The President of Religious Affairs at Masjid al-Haram

1397 AH / 1976 CE

REVIEWS FOR SAFWAT AL-TAFASIR

SHAYKH ABU 'L-HASAN 'ALI NADWI
(D. 1914 - 1999)

ALL PRAISE BELONGS TO ALLAH, Lord of the Worlds. May peace and blessings be upon the Master of the Messengers, Muhammad, and upon all his Family and Companions.

Throughout the centuries of Islamic authorship, the dominant approach to knowledge was to attempt to record, document and present everything that has been narrated about a given topic. Hence the books authored about *tafsir* (exegesis), *hadith* (traditions), *sira* (prophetic biography), and *tarikh* (history) resemble massive encyclopaedias and tomes of knowledge. And yet, despite this widespread approach possessing numerous benefits; the greatest of them being protecting this invaluable treasure of knowledge from being lost, and to establish within the reader the ability to choose what is most suitable to his proclivity (*dhawqihi*); it has resulted in a problem, especially in our era. This problem is that the beginner and intermediate level students are becoming confused when choosing the closest

opinion to that which is correct, and their minds become muddled such that nothing ends up firmly embedded in them. They find themselves lost in a dense forest of statements, opinions and ideologies (*madhahib*). Therefore, in every era, a number of authors have selected the best from these voluminous books and chosen the most correct and strongest opinions amongst them. It is these types of works that are of immense benefit to students of knowledge.

This era is in dire need for this style of authorship because of the little time that is given to Islamic studies, weakening aspirations, and scattered minds. As a result, our friend, the virtuous Shaykh, Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni, has been enabled by Allah with full *tawfiq* in compiling his book *Safwat al-tafasir*. He has saved students of knowledge an incredible amount of time, and has taken them by the hand to the fruits of his lifetime of studies and the summary of several major books of tafsir. None would be able to accomplish this task except one who has studied abundantly, has a sound ideology (*dhawquhu*), and has excelled in the field of teaching. Because of this, he warrants a debt of gratitude from the students of knowledge and those working in the field of tafsir—may Allah reward him handsomely and accept his efforts.

[Shaykh] Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi

Mecca Mukarrama

1396 AH / 1976 CE

REVIEWS FOR SAFWAT AL-TAFASIR

SHAYKH MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

(D. 1917 - 1996)

ALL PRAISE BELONGS TO ALLAH. He is the Lord who ought to be feared (*Ahl al-taqwa*) and the Lord of forgiveness (*Ahl al-maghfira*). May peace and blessings be upon the lighthouse of knowledge and guidance in this world and the next, Prophet Muhammad, and upon his Family and Companions.

The Quranic sciences require a gentle pen, a satisfying pen; one that is far from technical terminologies and philosophical debates. Its greatest mission is to clearly present the divine message and to make it accessible to the souls of the masses without being overly formal, using unnecessarily long words or misrepresenting it.

The virtuous Shaykh, Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni, has successfully accomplished these very objectives. He has simplified his tafsir of the Quran, *Safwat al-tafasir*, and added statements of the Pious Imams from the cream of the crop—both in relation to knowledge and manners (*adab*)—which infuse this work with metaphysical realities and

practical wisdom. We have noticed that Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni has combined two methods of tafsir in his book; namely, 'the narrations of the *Salaf*' (*ma'thurat* also known as *manqul*), and 'the independent reasoning of the later scholars' (*ijithadat al-khalaf*) i.e. both the transmitted and rational methods of tafsir (i.e. *manqul wa ma 'qul*) as it is commonly termed. Hence the reader will be able to see *both types of tafsir* before him at once, and will be able to benefit from the best of both worlds.

We have also noticed that other tafsirs are successful in one of two styles; either extreme brevity, or verbosity which students in this era are unable to bear. However, Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni—Allah reward him greatly—was able to maintain both balance and beauty in his approach to the Quranic sciences in his tafsir. He steered clear of anything questionable that could cause uneasiness by not mentioning contentious ideological points, or questionable hadiths that require extensive investigation and lengthy research.

May Allah grant benefit by him, expand his chest, and reward him on behalf of the *umma* with the best of rewards.

[Shaykh] Muhammad al-Ghazali al-Azhari
President of Da'wa & Usul al-Din in the Faculty of Sharia
Mecca Mukarrama

1396 AH / 1976 CE

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Bukhari</i>	al-Bukhari's <i>Sahih al-Bukhari</i>
<i>Muslim</i>	Muslim's <i>Sahih Muslim</i>
<i>Razi</i>	al-Razi's <i>Tafsir al-Kabir</i>
<i>Qurtubi</i>	al-Qurtubi's <i>Tafsir al-Qurtubi</i>
<i>Baydawi</i>	al-Baydawi's <i>Tafsir al-Baydawi</i>
<i>Tashil</i>	Ibn Juzay al-Kalbi's <i>Tashil li 'Ulum al-Tanzil</i>
<i>Bahr al-Muhit</i>	Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi's <i>Bahr al-Muhit</i>
<i>Ibn Kathir</i>	Ibn Kathir's <i>Tafsir Quran al-'Azim</i>
<i>Khazin</i>	al-Khazin's <i>Tafsir al-Khazin</i>
<i>Abu Sa'ud</i>	Abu Sa'ud's <i>Tafsir Abu Sa'ud</i>
<i>Hashiya al-Sawi</i>	al-Sawi's <i>Hashiya al-Sawi 'ala Jalalayn</i>
<i>Alusi</i>	al-Alusi's <i>Ruh al-Ma'ani</i>

THE KINGDOM

Tafsir of
Sura al-Mulk

SELECTIONS FROM

Safwat al-Tafasir

SHAYKH MUHAMMAD 'ALI AL-SABUNI

CHAPTER 67

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The 67th chapter of the Quran, Sura al-Mulk (The Kingdom) is a Meccan sura that responds to the disbelievers (*kuffar*) via declarations of Allah's total power over them—and everything else—in this world and the next. It describes the regret the disbelievers will express on the Day of Resurrection. The Beloved Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless and give peace to him and his family) always recited this sura after *salat al- 'Isha* and instructed us to do the same, mentioning that it will protect its reciter from the punishment in the grave.

THE BENEFITS OF SURA AL-MULK

Hadith reports state that this sura is called *Sura al-Mani'a* (the Defender), *Sura al-Munjiya* (The Deliverer) and *Sura al-Waqiya* (The Protector, الوقية) because it protects its reciter

from the punishment of the grave (*'adhab al-qabr*). The Beloved Prophet (Allah bless him and give peace to him and his family) mentioned the following benefits of Sura al-Mulk.

BENEFIT ONE

هِيَ الْمَانِعَةُ وَهِيَ الْمُنْجِيَةُ، تُنْجِي مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ

It is the Defender (*al-Man'ia*); it is the Deliverer which delivers one from the punishment in the grave. (*Tirmidhi*)

BENEFIT TWO

وَدَدْتُ أَنَّهَا فِي قَلْبِ كُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ - يَعْنِي: تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ

I would love for Sura al-Mulk to be in the heart of every believer. (*Targhib*)

BENEFIT THREE

عن جابر أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: كَانَ لَا يَنَامُ حَتَّى يَقْرَأَ ﴿الْمُلْكُ﴾ وَ ﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ﴾

Jabir b. 'Abdullah (Allah be pleased with him) states that Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless and give peace to him and his family) would not sleep until he recited Sura al-Sajda and Sura al-Mulk. (*Tirmidhi*)

THE REASON FOR REVELATION (*ASBAB AL-NUZUL*)

VERSE 13

﴿وَأَسِرُّوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ﴾

Whether you speak secretly or openly— He is fully aware of what is in the heart.

Tafsir al-Khazin (4/126) and Tafsir al-Alusi (29/13) record that Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with them) said:

This verse was revealed about the idolaters who would secretly plot against the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace), but Archangel Jibril would inform the Prophet about their plotting. One of them said to the other, "Whisper quietly so the God of Muhammad doesn't hear you." So Allah informed the Noble Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) that whispers and secrets are not hidden from Him whatsoever.

ON MIRACLES (*KARAMAT*)

The following report is one of the many proofs for the Honorific Miracles (*karamat*) given to non-prophets since hearing the deceased is not experienced by the average person. It has been recorded by al-Bayhaqi in *al-Shu'ab*, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya in *al-Ruh* (108), and al-Tirmidhi (4/395) that Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with them) said:

One of the Companions of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was sitting on a grave unaware that it was a grave. Suddenly, he heard the entombed man reciting Sura al-Mulk from inside the grave until he completed the sura. When he went back to the Prophet and informed him of this, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said:

هِيَ الْمَانِعَةُ، وَهِيَ الْمُنْجِيَةُ، تُنْجِيهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ

It is the Preventer (*al-Mani'a*) and it is the Rescuer (*al-Munjiyya*) which rescues one from the punishment of the grave.

SURA AL-MULK

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ① الَّذِي خَلَقَ
الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ
② الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ
تَفَافُوتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ ③ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ
كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ ④ وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا
السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا
لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ ⑤ وَلِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ
وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ⑥ إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا وَهِيَ تَفُورُ
⑦ تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا
أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ ⑧ قَالُوا بَلَى قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا
نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ ⑨ وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا
نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ⑩ فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ
فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ⑪ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُمْ
مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ⑫ وَأَسِرُوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوْ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ⑬ أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ⑭

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ ذُلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ
رِزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ ⑮ أَمِنتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمْ
الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ ⑯ أَمْ أَمِنتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرٍ ⑰ وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ⑱ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ
صَافَّاتٍ وَيَقْبِضْنَ مَا يُمَسِّكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ
⑲ أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ يَنْصَرُّكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَّ
الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ ⑳ أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ
رِزْقَهُ بَلْ لَجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ ㉑ أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ
أَهْدَى أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ㉒ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي
أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَا
تَشْكُرُونَ ㉓ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ
㉔ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ㉕ قُلْ إِنَّمَا
الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ㉖ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيئَتْ
وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدَّعُونَ ㉗ قُلْ
أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِيَ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَنْ يُجِيرُ الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ
عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ ㉘ قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ آمَنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ
مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ㉙ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا
فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ ㉚

TAFSIR

*I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan
In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

Verse 1

﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ﴾

1. *Blessed is He in Whose Hand rests all authority;*

i.e. may Allah be glorified and hallowed in the greatest manner; it is He who showers His creation with every conceivable blessing and to Him belongs supreme authority in the heavens and the earth, and He does with them as He pleases.

Tafsir al-Qurtubi records (18/206) that Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with father and son) said:

Allah has complete control of the entire universe; He honours whom He wills and He humiliates whom He wills. He gives life and He gives death. He enriches and impoverishes. He bestows and withholds.

Translator's note: The Quran has clear verses (*muhkamat*) and unclear verses (*mutashabihat*). This verse is considered an unclear verse and the meaning of the word *hand* (Arab. *yad*) in relation to Allah can bear multiple meanings. However, of necessity, this term *cannot* refer to a physical hand that is comprised of flesh and bones, because Allah has declared in one of the clear (definitive) Quranic verses in Sura al-Ikhlâs: *wa lam ya-ku 'l-lahu kufuwan ahad* or *there is none like unto Him*, meaning, He does not bear any resemblance to us whatsoever. Rather, as is common in English parlance, this word has a figurative meaning. It could be compared to the English statement *I've got him in the palm of my hand*, which connotes total control of something or someone, yet has no connection to a physical hand whatsoever. And Allah knows best. - End note.

﴿وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾

1. and He has power over all things.

i.e. He is able to do all things without effort. He has unlimited power and full authority to do as He pleases regarding any matter, without any objection or resistance from anyone. Then Allah describes manifestations (i.e. examples) of His Power and Immutable Wisdom saying,

Verse 2

﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ﴾

2. He Who created death and life...

i.e. He created life and death in this world. He gives life to

whom He wills and gives death to whom He wills. He is the One and Only Invincible God. The reason Allah mentions death first is because it stirs more fear in the soul [than mentioning life] and is the greatest motivating factor for man. It is most traumatic and truly frightening. Scholars say:

Death does not cause total annihilation and complete termination of our life. Rather, it is only a transfer from one dimension to another. It is for this reason that it has been undeniably confirmed in authentic *ahadith* that the dead can hear and see and sense while they are in their grave. This follows what the Final Prophet, Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), has stated as recorded by Bukhari and Muslim:

إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ، إِذَا وُضِعَ فِي قَبْرِهِ وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُ أَصْحَابُهُ،
وَأَنَّهُ لَيَسْمَعُ قَرَعَ نِعَالِهِمْ

Indeed, when one of you is lowered into his grave and his loved ones depart from his graveside, without doubt he hears their footsteps [leaving].

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give peace to him and his family) also once addressed his Companions (*Sahaba*) at a graveside by saying,

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، مَا أَنْتُمْ بِأَسْمَعَ لِمَا أَقُولُ مِنْهُمْ،
لَكِنَّهُمْ لَا يُجِيبُونَ

I swear by He who has full control of my soul! You are not more aware of what I am saying than they are. However, they cannot [audibly] respond.

Hence, death is not the ceasing of consciousness but merely the severance of the soul from the body and its separating from the body to enter a different realm of existence.

﴿لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾

2. ...to test you as to which of you is best in deeds—

i.e. in order to test you and try you—O mankind—to distinguish the good amongst you from the bad. *Best in deeds* also carries the meaning *most beautiful in conduct*. Al-Qurtubi says in his tafsir (18/207):

In order to test you so that *you* become convinced and certain of who you truly are. This is because Allah Most High has been fully aware of those who are obedient and those who are disobedient since pre-eternity (*azali*) [which refers to 'before time was created'].

﴿وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ﴾

2. and He is the Almighty.

i.e. and He is the Almighty (*al-'Aziz*), the Indomitable (*al-Ghalib*) insofar as exacting revenge against those who disobey Him. And His being Almighty (*al-'Aziz*) reminds us as human beings that we can never ward off death; hence this trait of Allah corresponds to the beginning of the verse: *He is the One who created death...*

﴿الْغَفُورُ﴾

2. the Forgiving.

i.e. Allah constantly forgives the sins of those who turn to Him in repentance (*tawba*). His being All-Forgiving

(*al-Ghafur*) reminds us that when we as human beings make mistakes during the course of our lives, He will forgive our sins when we turn back to Him. Hence, this divine trait of Allah is linked to 'life' mentioned in the beginning of the verse: *He is the One who created death and life...*

Translator's note: Many verses in the Quran conclude by mentioning two qualities of Allah Most High, e.g. in Sura al-Buruj: *wa huwa 'l-Ghafuru 'l-Wadud* (And He is All-Forgiving, Most Loving) and in Sura al-Mulk: *wa huwa 'l-Latifu 'l-Khabir* (And He is the Most Subtle, All-Aware), etc. These paired qualities are often linked to something in the beginning of the same verse or the verses preceding it. Recognizing this linkage in the Quran is a science in and of itself, and requires constant recitation of the Quran, spending time with the Book of Allah, and deep reflection to unlock its meanings. - End note.

Verse 3

﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا﴾

3. He Who created seven heavens, one above the other.

i.e. He created seven heavens in layers, one above the other. Every heaven is like a dome above the other.

﴿مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوتٍ﴾

3. You will never see any imperfections in the creation of the All-Merciful Lord.

i.e. dear reader, you will not see in the creation of the All-Merciful Lord (*al-Rahman*) any flaws, contradictions or incompatibilities. Rather, creation displays evidence of exquisite perfection and pure mastery embedded therein. The

reason Allah said: *fi khalqi 'r-Rahman* meaning *in the creation of the All-Merciful Lord*, and did not say: *fi khalqi 's-sama'* meaning *in the creation of the heavens* was to emphasize the importance of the heavens (i.e. the skies) and to magnify its status. The status of the heavens is magnified [by omitting its mention and mentioning its Maker, which is a rhetorical device], in order to draw attention to the breathtaking Power of Allah.

﴿فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِنْ فُطُورٍ﴾

3. Look again! Can you see any flaws?

i.e. look again to the skies above you, O human being, and look to its flawless design. Can you see any cracks, splits or seams?

Verse 4

﴿ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ﴾

3. Then look again and yet again;

i.e. then look another time, and then another! Look with the eye of reflection and contemplation at this amazing sky!

﴿يَنْقَلِبُ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا﴾

3. your sight will return to you weakened...

i.e. your sight will return to you awestruck and utterly humbled, unable to find the defects you were searching for.

﴿وَهُوَ خَسِيرٌ﴾

4. ...and exhausted.

i.e. fatigued and at the point of exhaustion. Al-Razi says in

his tafsir *Mafatih al-ghayb* (30/58):

This verse means: if you were to exhaust every effort and go to great lengths to find cracks in the sky or any type of defects therein, your vision would only get weary and exhausted trying to find even one. Not only would your vision return exhausted, but regarding the flaws you wish to find in the sky, you will never find a single one.

Al-Qurtubi says in *al-Jami' li 'l-Ahkam al-Quran* (18/209):

This verse means: if you look upwards and inspect the skies above you for any flaws, then *karratayn* or *time and time again* your vision will become tired and exhausted, but you will still never find a single flaw or defect in the creation of Allah. The only reason we were commanded to look twice is because when human beings only look at something once, they often do not see its flaws until they inspect it again. The intent of Allah's saying: *karratayn* or *time and time again* is to challenge us to look abundantly, as proven by the rest of the verse: *and still your sight will return to you tired and exhausted*.

Then Allah describes what He decorates the sky with, such as shining stars and massive planets,

Verse 5

﴿وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ﴾

5. We have adorned the lower heaven with lamps,

Here, the letter 'lam' in *laqad* (لَقَدْ) is called *lam al-qasam*, which means the letter 'lam' used for swearing an oath. The Arabic word *qad* (قَدْ) is also used to provide strong emphasis and

certainty to that which follows it. Therefore, the word *laqad* carries double emphasis. The verse means: I swear by Allah (*wallahi*), We have most certainly decorated the sky that is closest to you, O human beings, with illuminating stars and brilliant planets. This refers to the first sky, the closest sky to the earth. The exegetes (*mufasssirun*) state:

The stars were called lamps (*masabih*) because they illuminate the night-sky the way a lamp illuminates a room.

﴿وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ﴾

5. and made them missiles against the devils;

i.e. and We have given them an additional purpose, namely to shoot your enemies—the devils—who continuously try to steal news from heavens. *Bahr al-Muhit* records (8/299) that Qatada said:

Almighty Allah has created the stars for three purposes:

- 1) as ornamentation, to adorn the night-sky
- 2) as protection, to shoot the devils who try to steal news from the heavens
- 3) as navigation, for man to use as reference points as he travels by land and sea.

Tafsir al-Khazin records (4/125):

If someone objects saying: how can the stars be a decoration (*zinah*) on the one hand, and also be used as missiles against the devils on the other? Being a decoration implies that it must remain intact, whereas being a missile implies that it will be destroyed. So how can these two states be reconciled? The answer

to this is: this does not mean that the devils will be shot with the entire star itself. Rather, it is perfectly acceptable for a spark of flaming fire to be taken from a star, and the devils are shot with that flaming fire, which in Arabic is called *Shihab* or *Shuhub* (شُهَب). This is similar to a torch that is kindled from a flaming fire; after lighting the torch, the fire remains precisely as it was before.

This is substantiated by the words of Allah elsewhere,

﴿إِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخُطْفَةَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ﴾

But whoever manages to stealthily eavesdrop is instantly pursued by a piercing flare. (*Saffat* 37:10)

In other words, the entire star is not used to shoot the devils. Rather, they are shot with a burning flame from the star.

﴿وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ﴾

5. and We have prepared for them the torment of the Blaze.

i.e. and in the Hereafter We have prepared an evil inferno as punishment for the devils, even after being shot and burnt with shooting stars in this world. This punishment refers to a stoked, raging Fire.

Verse 6

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ﴾

6. For those who reject their Lord, there is the torment of Hell.

i.e. and those who deny their Lord will also be punished in the Hellfire. So the punishment will not be exclusive to the devils, rather it is for everyone who rejects Allah among the human beings and the jinn.

﴿وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ﴾

6. What an evil destination!

i.e. what an evil destination and final abode for the disbelievers the Hellfire is! Then Allah Most High describes *Jahannam* (Hellfire) and its punishments, its horrors and its shackles saying,

Verse 7

﴿إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا﴾

7. When they are thrown into it,

i.e. when they are cast into it and thrown headlong into *Jahannam* (Hellfire) the same way firewood is cast into a pit of fire.

﴿سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا﴾

7. they will hear it roaring,

i.e. they will hear *Jahannam* making a horrifying, blood-curdling sound—like the braying of a distressed donkey—due to the intensity of its flames and its scalding heat. Ibn Juzay says in his tafsir *al-Tashil*:

The word *shahiq* (شَهِيق) refers to the most bone-chilling, awful sound that a distressed donkey can make. This verse refers to the sound Hellfire makes due to its intense heat and horrors.

Ibn Juzay's Quranic commentary *al-Tashil* records (4/134) that Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with them) said:

The terrifying screaming sound (*shahiq*) of *Jahannam* will occur when the disbelievers are cast into it. Hell

will emit an awful, hair-raising scream like when a mule is distressed. Then it will release an enormous exhale and will moan with a loud, ghastly moaning sound. None will hear it except they will be utterly petrified and scared stiff.

﴿وَهِيَ تَفُورُ﴾

7. as it blazes furiously.

i.e. it seethes and boils over like a boiling pot that bubbles and boils over because of the intensity of its anger and the force of its flames. Mujahid said:

It is boiling with rage at them like when a small number of seeds are boiled in a large pot of water, tossing and turning because of the immensely powerful heat.

Verse 8

﴿تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ﴾

8. It almost bursts with rage.

i.e. *Jahannam* (Hellfire) almost bursts into fragments and nearly explodes into different sections because of the intensity of its rage and fury toward the enemies of Allah.

﴿كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ﴾

8. Every time a group is cast into it,

i.e. every time a group of disbelievers is entered into it.

﴿سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا﴾

8. its keepers will ask them,

﴿وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ﴾

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i.e. every time a group of disbelievers is entered into it.

﴿سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا﴾

8. its keepers will ask them,

i.e. the Angels who guard the Hellfire (called *Zabaniya*) ask them a question to rebuke them and censure them.

﴿أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ﴾

8. "Did a warner not come to you?"

i.e. did a messenger not come to you and warn you and frighten you of this dreadful Day? The exegetes (*mufasssirin*) state:

The purpose of this question is to intensify their agony, in order to add further remorse unto their already agonizing remorse, and to add more torment unto their torment. This is a type of psychological torment.

Verse 9

﴿قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا﴾

9. They will say, "Yes, a warner did come to us, but we did not believe..."

i.e. they will reply, "Yes, there is absolutely no doubt that a warning messenger did come to us, and he recited the verses of Allah unto us (i.e. the Quran). However, we belied him and denied his message."

﴿وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ﴾

9. ...and said, 'Allah has revealed nothing;

i.e. we constantly denied and rejected the Truth saying "Allah has not sent any revelation unto anyone." Al-Razi says in his Quranic commentary *Mafatih al-ghayb* (30/64):

This is their explicit confession of the justice (*adl*) of Allah and their admission that Allah has removed

any excuses they could have presented in His court due to Him sending His messengers. However, it was *they* who rejected the messengers and said, "Allah has not revealed anything."

﴿إِن أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ﴾

9. you are extremely misguided."

i.e. O Messengers, you are but far from the truth and deeply misguided.

Verse 10

﴿وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ﴾

10. And they will say, "Had we listened or reasoned,

i.e. the disbelievers will lament saying, "Had we only used our intellects or listened to the divine summons to the truth, seeking guidance..."

﴿مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ﴾

10. we would not be among the inmates of the Blaze."

i.e. "...we would not have warranted eternity in Hellfire." The speech of the disbelievers ends here.

Verse 11

﴿فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ﴾

11. And so they will confess their sins.

i.e. so they will acknowledge each of their crimes and their rejection of Allah's messengers.

﴿فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ﴾

11. So away with the inmates of the Blaze!

i.e. so away with, and destruction to, the denizens of Hell! Ibn Kathir says in his *Tafsir al-Quran al-'Azim* (3/528):

In the end, they will consider themselves to be blameworthy and in the wrong, but they only feel remorse when feeling remorse is of no benefit.

This verse is a supplication (*du'a*) and it means: may Allah distance them from His Mercy! (*bu'd min rahmatillah!*). In other words, as a necessary consequence, they have—by their own decisions—distanced themselves from the divine. This is expressed through the notion that they will be harshly driven away. When Allah mentions the state of the wretched disbelievers, He follows it by mentioning the state of the pious believers saying,

Verse 12

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ﴾

12. As for those who fear their Lord without seeing Him...

i.e. they possess a reverent fear (*khashya*) of their Lord although they do not see Him directly. They refrain from His disobedience, seeking only His Pleasure.

﴿لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ﴾

12. ...for them is forgiveness and immense reward.

i.e. they will earn immense forgiveness for their sins in the court of Allah and such tremendous rewards from Him

that their true value cannot be calculated by anyone except Allah Most High.

Verse 13

﴿وَأَسِرُّوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ﴾

13. Whether you speak secretly or openly—

This is addressed to all creation [as evidenced by the word *qawlakum* which uses the plural form of *you* or '*kum*']. This verse means: O mankind, whether you conceal your words and your thoughts, or pronounce them aloud publicly, it is the same; without doubt, Allah knows them.

﴿إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ﴾

13. He is fully aware of what is in the heart.

i.e. because Almighty Allah is fully-aware of what is kept secret and the true intentions and motivations for everything. He knows what crosses the mind and the heart, and the evil thoughts which are whispered in the heart. *Tafsir al-Khazin* (4/126) and *Tafsir al-Alusi* (29/13) record that Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with them) mentions the reason for this revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*) as follows:

This verse was revealed about the idolaters who would secretly plot against the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace), but Angel Jibril would inform the Prophet about their plotting. One of them said to the other, "Whisper quietly so the God of Muhammad doesn't hear you." So Allah informed the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) that whispers and secrets are not hidden from Him whatsoever.

Verse 14

﴿أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ﴾

14. How could He Who created not know...

i.e. would the Creator not know about His creation? How could He who created everything and brought it into existence not know the private and public acts of His creation?

﴿وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾

14. ...while He Knows all Subtleties, and is All-Aware?

i.e. while He recognizes the subtleties of His servants (*al-Latif*), and He knows the minutest details and also their depths. He is All-Aware (*al-Khabir*); nothing escapes His Knowledge. Not an atom in the universe moves or becomes motionless, nor does any soul feel distressed, except that He has full knowledge of it. Following this, Allah then presents proofs of His Power and Incomparable Oneness (*wahdaniyya*), and some of His bounties and favours upon His servants,

Verse 15

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا﴾

15. It is He who made the earth manageable for you,

i.e. Allah has made the earth manageable for you and easy to traverse.

﴿فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا﴾

15.. so travel about in its regions,

Tafsir

i.e. O people, travel the world to all corners of the globe. Ibn Kathir states in his tafsir (3/528):

So travel wherever you wish in the earth, and frequently visit its different countries and regions for business and trade.

﴿وَكُلُوا مِنْ رَزْقِهِ﴾

15. and eat from His provisions.

i.e. and take benefit from that which Allah has blessed you with regarding various ways of earning a livelihood. Al-Alusi states in his tafsir *Ruh al-Ma'ani fi tafsir al-Quran al-'azim wa saba al-mathani* (29/15):

On a number of occasions in the Quran, the concept of benefit has been connected to food because it is the most important [for survival] and provides the most all-encompassing, general benefit [at a basic human level]. This verse is a proof of the praiseworthiness of taking practical steps in earning a livelihood, and it does not in any way contradict the Islamic concept of reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*). This is borne out in the incident where 'Umar b. al-Khattab (Allah be pleased with him) passed by some people who travelled to perform Hajj but did not bring any provisions for the journey along with them. So 'Umar noticed them and asked, "Who are you people?" They replied, "Those who trust in Allah (*mutawakkilun*)."

He retorted, "Nay, you are unmindful of Allah (*mutawaakilun*). The one who truly trusts in Allah is he who plants a seed in the earth (i.e. does everything in his power), then trusts in Allah [for the results]."

Translator's note: Scholars say that the one who relies on his plan is not a true believer, and the one who has no plan

is also not a true believer. Rather, a believer should make a plan and execute it, then leave the results up to Allah. Additionally, a believer should never attribute success to his efforts or plan, but rather to the *tawfiq* (divine success) granted by Allah. - End note.

﴿وَالْيَهُ النَّشُورُ﴾

15. And to Him will be the Resurrection.

i.e. after all of the actions described in the previous verses, ultimately to Him is the final return after death for Reckoning (*Hisab*) and Compensation (*Jaza'*). Then Allah threatens the disbelievers of Mecca who deny His Messenger, Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace),

Verse 16

﴿أَأَمِنْتُمْ مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَن يَخْسِفَ بِكُمْ الْأَرْضَ﴾

16. Are you sure that He Who is in heaven will not cause the earth to swallow you up...

i.e. O you group of disbelievers, do you feel confident that [if you continue your immoral behavior and arrogant denial of Allah that] your Almighty Lord will not cause the earth to swallow you into its belly, after He made it manageable for you and easy to travel in?

﴿فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ﴾

16. ...as it quakes violently?

i.e. while it quakes and violently shakes with you on it [i.e. an earthquake]. Al-Razi states in *Mafatih al-ghayb* (30/70):

This verse means: Allah will cause the earth to violently quake and move, then it will swallow them up, and it will cover them up while they are being swallowed by it and they will disappear. Then the earth above them will be shaking while closing, then it will cast them to the lowest of the low [i.e. the Hellfire].

Verse 17

﴿أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَن يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا﴾

17. Or are you sure that He Who is in heaven will not unleash upon you a storm of stones?

i.e. or do you feel safe that the Almighty Allah will not send down a storm of stones upon you from the sky like He sent down on the People of Lut and Abraha's Army of War Elephants?

﴿فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ﴾

17. Only then would you know how serious My warning was!

i.e. you will know when you come face to face with the punishment just how severe My warning and My punishment was for those who deny! This verse contains a severe warning. The typical word that would be expected in this verse is *nadhiri* (نَذِيرِي - My warning) instead of *nadhiri* (نَذِيرِي - warning), and the same for the following verse, *nakiri* (نَكِيرِي - My disapproval) instead of *nakir* (نَكِيرِي - disapproval). The letter ya (ي) was omitted from the ends of these two words to maintain the rhyme-scheme throughout, a very subtle yet profound mark of the inimitable eloquence of the Quran.

Verse 18

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ﴾

18. And certainly those before them also denied the truth;

i.e. their defiance is nothing new to Allah; the disbelievers in previous generations also denied their messengers such as the People of Nuh, 'Ad and Thamud, and their ilk. This verse intends to comfort the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)—which is called *tasliya*—and is simultaneously a stern threat to his people, the idolaters of Mecca.

﴿فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ﴾

18..and how severe was My response?

i.e. and how severe was My response to their denial in terms of punishment descending upon them? Was it not the pinnacle of horror and untold dread? After Allah warns them about what He might unleash on them such as the earth swallowing them or sending a storm of stones upon them from the sky, the tone shifts from one of *jalal* (majesty) to one of *jamal* (beauty). He shifts our focus in order for us to draw a lesson from the birds in the sky and the way Allah has perfected their creation. This is also a means by which the idolaters ought to recognize the powerlessness of their 'gods' to create anything remotely close to such beauty.

Verse 19

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَافَّاتٍ وَيَقْبِضْنَ﴾

19. Do they not see the birds above them, spreading and folding their wings?

i.e. have they not looked—with the eye of reflection and

contemplation—to the birds above them, spreading their wings in the air when they are flying, and their circling in the air and soaring, and their flapping their wings back and forth, time and time again?

Translator's note: From a linguistic perspective, nouns indicate fixed states while verbs indicate movement and action. - End note.

Since most of the time when birds soar mid-flight, their wings are outstretched as if fixed that way, hence *the noun* was used *saffaat* (صَافَّاتٍ) [which indicates a more fixed state]. Whereas when birds retract their wings to flap them (called wingbeats), this occurs over and over again, hence *the verb* was used *yaqbidn* (يَقْبِضْنَ) [which indicates a recurring action]. Ibn Juzay al-Kalbi states in *al-Tashil* (4/136):

If someone were to object, asking, "[Instead of *yaqbidn*,] why does the Quran not use the noun *qaabidaat* (قَابِذَاتٍ) to match the noun *saafaat* (صَافَّاتٍ)?" Someone might retort, "When large birds fly, the normal position they maintain is having their wings outstretched, similar to the typical position humans adopt when swimming is to have their limbs (arms & legs) outstretched. So Allah mentioned the active-participle (*ism faa'il* or 'the doer') *saafaat* because this is the most frequent position birds that adopts when flying [i.e. with their wings outstretched for gliding]. As for retracting and folding its wings in, large birds only do this for a relatively short time during flight in order to rest and for diving, so accordingly, Allah used the verb *yaqbidn* when mentioning this due to its [relatively] low usage rate.

Translator's note: This refers to birds of prey (e.g. large birds

like eagles and falcons, etc.) because they do not flap their wings as much as smaller birds (e.g. seagulls, pigeons, etc.) do during flight. Larger birds tend to soar and glide more than smaller ones and that is one way to recognise them with the naked eye. - End note.

﴿مَا يُمَسِّكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ﴾

19. None holds them up except the All-Merciful Lord.

i.e. while flapping their wings during flight, none holds them in the air and prevents them from falling except the All-Merciful Lord (*al-Rahman*) whose mercy encompasses every single atom in existence. Al-Razi states in his tafsir (30/71):

That is because despite its heavy weight and large body, nothing is holding it up in the air except 'Allah's holding it there' and His Power, and His inspiration to the bird of how to flap its wings and fly, which it does for its own benefit. This is from the mercy of the All-Merciful Lord (*al-Rahman*).

﴿إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ﴾

19. Indeed, He Sees everything.

i.e. He knows how He creates and how He originates the wonders of the world by His Unlimited Knowledge and Wisdom. Then Allah rebukes the idolaters for worshipping that which does not benefit them nor help them at all saying,

Verse 20

﴿أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَّكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُم مِّنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ﴾

20. Also, what force can help you if the All-Merciful Lord does not?

i.e. which helper and supporter is able to defend you against the punishment of Allah?! Tafsir al-Khazin records (4/126) that Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with father and son) said this means:

Who can protect you from Me if I wish to punish you?

﴿إِنَّ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ﴾

20. Indeed, the disbelievers are but lost in delusion.

i.e. the disbelievers—in their staunch belief that their gods can benefit and harm—are in nothing but indescribable ignorance (*jahl 'azim*) and plain error, such that they believe fiction to be reality and in so doing, demonstrate extreme zealotry for their idols and statues.

Verse 21

﴿أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ﴾

20. Or who is it that will provide for you if He withholds His provision?

i.e. or who can provide for you other than Allah if He withholds His provision? This verse and the previous verse are addressing the disbelievers in a manner that is reproaching and threatening, and also establishes a proof against them. (*Tafsir al-Razi*)

﴿بَلْ لَّجُوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ﴾

21. Yet they persist in insolence and aversion.

i.e. rather, they stubbornly dive headlong into wrongdoing, persist upon disobedience, and are extremely averse to the truth of Islam and faith (*iman*).

Then Allah strikes a parable comparing the disbeliever and the believer saying,

Verse 22

﴿أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

22. Who is more guided: someone who walks always falling on his face, or someone who walks upright on the Straight Path?

i.e. is someone more guided if he walks with his head lowered and cannot see the way forward which causes him to walk haphazardly like a blind man stumbling along, always tripping and falling on his face? Or is someone who walks perfectly upright, clearly seeing his path and not stumbling his steps because he is confidently walking on a clear illuminated path more guided? The exegetes (*mufasssirun*) state:

This is a parable that Allah struck about a disbeliever (*kafir*) and a believer (*mu'min*). So the disbeliever is like the blind man walking without any guidance and without any assistance. He can never be guided to the right path, so he wanders off and deviates from the path, always falling on his face. The believer is like the strong, fit man who can see perfectly, walking on the straight path. He does not stumble and walk around haphazardly. This is their example in this world, and likewise will be their respective

states in the next. The believer will be resurrected and walking upright on a straight path, while the disbeliever will be resurrected and walking on his face to the lowest levels of Hell.

Qatada says:

The disbeliever was eager and excited to rush headlong into the disobedience of Allah, thus Allah will resurrect him on the Day of Judgment on his face. The believer, on the other hand, used to live a transparent and upright life, so Allah will resurrect him on a straight path on the Day of Judgment.

Ibn Kathir states in *Tafsir al-Quran al-'Azim* (3/30):

This is an example Allah put forth of a disbeliever and a believer. The example of the disbeliever's misguidance is like someone walking hunched over facing down, not upright at all. He does not know where he is going nor can he identify upon which path he's walking. He is lost, confused and has gone astray. The believer, however, is walking perfectly upright on a straight path. Which of these two is more guided on their path? The first or the second!?

Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with them) said:

It is an example of he who treads the path of misguidance (*dalala*) and he who treads the path of guidance (*hidaya*).

Then Allah mentions several undeniable blessings to them in order for them to realize the evil of their rejection of God and associating partners with Him saying,

Verse 23

﴿قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ﴾

23. Say, "He is the One Who brought you into existence and gave you hearing, sight, and intellect."

i.e. say to them, O Muhammad, "Allah is He who brought you into existence from non-existence and blessed you with these blessings; hearing, sight and intelligence." Allah specifically mentioned these faculties because they are the primary instruments by which knowledge and understanding are acquired.

﴿قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

23. Yet what little thanks you give."

i.e. you show very little gratitude to your Lord for His infinite blessings. The tafsir *Bahr al-Muhit* records (8/303) that Ibn 'Atiyya said:

This verse intends to say that true gratitude (*shukr*) has not been given, which is why the verse expresses it by saying 'hardly' (*qalil*). The Arabs say, "This piece of land hardly (*qalil*) bears fruit" when they mean it does not bear fruit at all.

Verse 24

﴿قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

24. Say, "He is the One Who has dispersed you all over the earth,

i.e. also say, "He created you and made you populate the earth in great numbers."

﴿وَالِيهِ تُخْشَرُونَ﴾

24. ...and to Him you will be gathered."

i.e. and to Him, and Him alone, you will be returned for Reckoning (*Hisab*) and Compensation (*Jaza'*).

Verse 25

﴿وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾

25. Still they ask the believers, "When will this threat come to pass, if what you say is true?"

i.e. when will the Gathering (*Hashr*) and Compensation (*Jaza'*) which you threaten us with occur, if you are indeed truthful about what you are telling us regarding the coming of the Final Hour and the Gathering? This is the non-believers essentially mocking the believers.

Verse 26

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ﴾

26. Say, "That knowledge is with Allah alone,"

i.e. say to them, O Muhammad, "The exact time of the Final Hour and the punishment is known only to Allah; none else."

﴿وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ﴾

26. "and I am only a clear warner."

i.e. "I am but a warning messenger. I cause you to fear the punishment of Allah because He commanded me to do so." Then Allah Most High describes the state of the idolaters

Verse 23

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i.e. "I am but a warning messenger. I cause you to fear the punishment of Allah because He commanded me to do so." Then Allah Most High describes the state of the idolaters

on that distressful Day saying,

Verse 27

﴿فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً﴾

27. But when they see it approaching,

i.e. but when they see the punishment coming close to them, and they see the horrors of the Day of Judgment with their own eyes.

﴿سَيِّئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا﴾

27. the faces of those who disbelieved will turn gloomy,

i.e. the signs of shame will appear on their faces. Dejection, worry and sadness will cover their faces, and humiliation and brokenness will overcome them. *Bahr al-Muhit* records (8/307):

Merely seeing the punishment of Allah will blacken their faces, and evil and dejection will appear thereon like someone who is on death row being escorted to his execution.

﴿وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدْعُونَ﴾

27..and it will be said, "This is what you were calling for."

i.e. the angels, to rebuke and reprimand them, will say to them, "This is what you were asking for in the world! This is what you desired to be hastened unto you with your mockery and your confrontational denial!"

Verse 28

﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِیَ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا﴾

28. Say, "Have you considered? Whether Allah causes me and those with me to perish, or has mercy on us..."

i.e. O My *Habib* Muhammad, say to those idolaters who want to destroy you, "Tell me; even if Allah causes me and those with me to perish, or has mercy on us by extending our lives,"

﴿مَنْ يُجِيرُ الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ﴾

28. ...who will save the disbelievers from a painful torment?"

i.e. nevertheless, who will protect you from the painful torment of Allah? The Quran uses the noun *kafirin* (disbelievers) instead of the expected pronoun 'you' [i.e. *who will save you*] to further disparage their crime of denying Allah (*kufr*), and also to record their *kuf*r and use it against them in the court of Allah. The exegetes (*mufasssirun*) state:

The disbelievers were eagerly wishing for the death of the divinely protected Prophet, Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), and the Muslims as a whole. So Allah commanded him to say to them, "Even if Allah causes me to die and destroys those with me, then still, what relief and what benefit will that provide you? Who is there that will save you from the punishment of Allah if it descends? Do you believe that the idols will save you from the painful torment? (*Razi's Tafsir al-Kabir* 30/76)

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﴿سَيِّئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا﴾

27. the faces of those who disbelieved will turn gloomy,

i.e. the signs of shame will appear on their faces. Dejection, worry and sadness will cover their faces, and humiliation and brokenness will overcome them. *Bahr al-Muhit* records (8/307):

Merely seeing the punishment of Allah will blacken their faces, and evil and dejection will appear thereon like someone who is on death row being escorted to his execution.

﴿وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدْعُونَ﴾

27..and it will be said, "This is what you were calling for."

i.e. the angels, to rebuke and reprimand them, will say to them, "This is what you were asking for in the world! This is what you desired to be hastened unto you with your mockery and your confrontational denial!"

Verse 28

﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِیَ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا﴾

28. Say, "Have you considered? Whether Allah causes me and those with me to perish, or has mercy on us..."

i.e. O My *Habib* Muhammad, say to those idolaters who want to destroy you, "Tell me; even if Allah causes me and those with me to perish, or has mercy on us by extending our lives,"

﴿مَنْ يُجِيرُ الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ﴾

28. ...who will save the disbelievers from a painful torment?"

i.e. nevertheless, who will protect you from the painful torment of Allah? The Quran uses the noun *kafirin* (disbelievers) instead of the expected pronoun 'you' [i.e. *who will save you*] to further disparage their crime of denying Allah (*kufr*), and also to record their *kufr* and use it against them in the court of Allah. The exegetes (*mufasssirun*) state:

The disbelievers were eagerly wishing for the death of the divinely protected Prophet, Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), and the Muslims as a whole. So Allah commanded him to say to them, "Even if Allah causes me to die and destroys those with me, then still, what relief and what benefit will that provide you? Who is there that will save you from the punishment of Allah if it descends? Do you believe that the idols will save you from the painful torment? (*Razi's Tafsir al-Kabir* 30/76)

Verse 29

﴿قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ أَمَنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا﴾

29. Say, "He is the All-Merciful Lord (Rahman). We believe in Him and we trust in Him."

i.e. say to them, "We have believed in Allah, the One and Only God. Upon Him do we rely in all of our affairs, not upon our own wealth nor our own efforts or manpower."

﴿فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ﴾

29. You will soon know who is in clear misguidance."

i.e. "very soon you will come to know who is misguided: us or you." This verse contains a threat to the idolaters of Mecca.

Verse 30

﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا﴾

30. Say, "Consider this: if your water were to sink deep into the earth,

i.e. say to them, O Muhammad, "Tell me; if your water sinks deep into the depths of the earth so that you are unable to extract it."

﴿فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ﴾

30. then who else could give you pure flowing water in its place?"

i.e. then who is there that can retrieve it for you so that it returns to being flowing, running water on top of the earth? Can someone besides Allah give it to you? So then why do you associate idols and statues with the Creator and true

Provider, Allah?

To end on the beautiful example of water—the most basic element necessary for life itself, which also highlights Allah's mercy and ultimate control over it—is to beautifully remind all mankind that each and every blessing is from Allah, and Allah alone.

By the aid of Almighty Allah,
the tafsir of Sura al-Mulk
is now complete



GLIMPSES OF NOTABLE TAFSIRS

TAFSIR IBN KATHIR

Author: al-Hafiz 'Imad al-Din 'Umar b. Kathir

School of Jurisprudence: Shafi'i

Year of Death: 747 AH

Volumes: 4 (Four)

The method adopted by Ibn Kathir is *tafsir bi 'l-ma'thur* or exegesis by narration, that is, under every verse he has first described a summary of its exegesis, then he mentions narrations and reports from the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), or the Companions, or their Successors, to explain its various words or phrases. Apart from being an exegete (*mufassir*), Ibn Kathir was also a Hadith Master (*Hafiz*), and was well-versed in the art of hadith criticism and review. Therefore, he removed relevant weak and fabricated narrations which were transmitted by earlier commentators. The books of *tafsir bi 'l-ma'thur* or

exegesis by narration are filled with Judeo-Christian narrative (*Isra'iliyyat*). Ibn Kathir is extremely cautious in treating these citations and his approach is wholesome and based on the Quran and Sunnah. Hence, he has not cited many *Isra'iliyyat* reports. At any rate, in the category of *Tafsir by narration*, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* is the most cautious and reliable tafsir.

IMAM AL-RAZI'S TAFSIR AL-KABIR

Author: Fakhr al-Din Muhammad b. Ziyad al-Din al-Razi
 School of Jurisprudence: Shafi'i
 Year of Death: 606 AH
 Volumes: 32 (Thirty-two) volumes in 17 bindings

The true title of this book is *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, but it is widely known by the name *Tafsir al-Kabir*. Insofar as *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* is the most concise and matchless *mathur Tafsir* (which is synonymous with *manqul Tafsir*), i.e. a tafsir using narration and transmitted reports, likewise, there is no parallel to *Tafsir al-Kabir* in relation to the use of logic and reason, which is another type of tafsir called *tafsir bi'l-ma'qul*. About this particular book of tafsir, some people have remarked, *fihī kullī shay'in illa al-Tafsir* or 'it contains everything except *Tafsir*,' as cited in Imam al-Suyuti's *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Quran*. But many consider this remark to be an injustice to this remarkable book because it is matchless in interpreting the meanings of the Quran.

The prominent features of this book are:

1. The explanation, grammatical points, backgrounds of revelation, and all the narrations related to them have all been presented by Imam al-Razi in one place and are very well organized.

In other tafsirs, these discussions are generally scattered or disorganized, which can make it quite time-consuming to read and digest.

2. He has described the grandeur and majesty of the Quran in detail.
3. The legal injunctions (*ahkam*) relating to a verse have been described with detailed reasoning.
4. Any interpretations introduced by deviant sects into the meaning of a verse have been described in full and then refuted with detailed arguments. In this way, it contains strong refutations against all the errant sects of his time, namely, the *Jahmiyya*, the *Mu'tazila*, the *Mujassima* (Anthropomorphists), and the *'Ibadiyya*, etc.
5. *Tafsir al-Kabir* describes the connections between the verses of the Quran. The reason given for a link and affinity between the verses, as described by him, is so appealing and reasonable that it imparts not only a sense of satisfaction, but also an ecstatic feeling of elegance and grandeur of the Quran.

Overall, *Tafsir al-Kabir* is a concise tafsir. However, people commonly remark about its lengthy discussions (e.g. the tafsir of Sura Fatiha alone comprises 150 pages). However, it is in the earlier part that the explanation is lengthy, but takes on fewer words as it progresses. Priceless gems of knowledge and understanding may be received from it.

One little known fact related to this tafsir is that Imam al-Razi had written this tafsir up to *Sura al-Fath* when he died. Hence, after *Sura al-Fath*, another scholar, either Qadi

Shahab al-Din b. Khalil al-Khawli al-Dimashqi (d. 639 AH) or Shaykh Najm al-Din Ahmad b. al-Qamuli (d. 777 AH), completed it, as mentioned in vol 2 of *Kashf al-zunun*, p. 477. Recall that *Sura al-Fath* is in the 26TH juz of the Quran, thus Imam al-Razi completed approximately 85% of his tafsir. That said, the completion is so marvellously done and the style of Imam al-Razi has been so thoroughly maintained, that anyone unaware of this fact would never suspect that the latter portion was written by someone other than Imam al-Razi.

TAFSIR ABU SA'UD

Author: Qadi Abu Sa'ud Muhammad al-'Imadi
 School of Jurisprudence: Hanafi
 Year of Death: 951 AH
 Volumes: 5 (Five)

The full name of this tafsir is *Irshad al-'Aql al-Salim ila Mazaya al-Quran al-Karim*. It is a masterpiece, exhibiting Abu Sa'ud's depth of knowledge, insight and understanding of the Quran—all in a concise manner. This tafsir contains highly refined and subtle points about the arrangement and eloquence of the Quran. It allows for an easy understanding of the Quran while following a meticulous style, and often replaces al-Zamakhshari's renowned *Tafsir Kashshaf*.

TAFSIR AL-QURTUBI

Author: Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abu Bakr al-Qurtubi
 School of Jurisprudence: Maliki
 Year of Death: 671 AH
 Volumes: 21 volumes in 12 bindings

Written by the famous research scholar of Andalusia, Spain, Imam al-Qurtubi, this tafsir's full name is *al-Jam' li'l-Ahkam al-Quran*. The primary purpose of this book was to deduce legal rulings (*ahkam*) from the Quranic verses, but he has also aptly commented on the meanings of verses, scrutinized difficult words, discussed composition, rhetoric, and relevant narrations in his *tafsir*. In addition, instructions from the Quran for everyday life have been clearly explained. This tafsir should not to be confused with the tafsir of the Hanafi scholar, al-Jassas, nor that of Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi, both bearing a similar name, *Ahkam al-Quran*.

TAFSIR RUH AL-MA'ANI

Author: 'Allama Muhammad al-Alusi
 School of Jurisprudence: Hanafi
 Year of Death: 1270 AH
 Volumes: 30 volumes in 15 bindings

Written by the renowned 'Iraqi scholar of Baghdad, this tafsir's full name is *Ruh al-Ma'ani fi Tafsir al-Quran al-'Azim wa Saba al-Mathani*. Since this is a publication from the relatively later eras, he has tried to gather important discussions from previous tafsirs. Hence, elaborate discussions have been carried out on language, grammar, literature, rhetoric, jurisprudence, creed, etymology, geophysics, astronomy, philosophy, spirituality, and relevant narrations. In the matter of reporting hadith, 'Allama Alusi has been more careful than other commentators. In this respect, it may be called a synopsis of the earlier tafsirs. Mufti Taqi Usmani quotes Moulana Yusuf Binnori's article *Yatim al-Bayan*, saying: "...*Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani*... is a tafsir of the Quran on the pattern

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TAFSIR AL-BAYDAWI

Author: 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar al-Shirazi al-Baydawi
 School of Jurisprudence: Shafi'i
 Year of Death: 685 AH
 Volumes: 1 volume

Written by the 13TH-century Persian scholar, Imam al-Baydawi's *Anwar al-tanzil wa asrar al-ta'wil* (The lights of revelation and the secrets of interpretation) is a popular Quranic tafsir (exegesis). This work is largely a condensed and amended edition of al-Zamakhshari's *Kashshaf*. Although *Kashshaf* displays great learning, it suffers from Mutazilite views which al-Baydawi has tried to amend, sometimes by refuting them and other times by omitting them.

ABU HAYYAN AL-ANDALUSI'S BAHR AL-MUHIT

Author: Muhammad al-Barbari Abu Hayyan al-Gharnati
 School of Jurisprudence: Maliki
 Year of Death: 745 AH
 Volumes: 9 volumes

An expert and defender of the science of *Qir'at* (Quranic elocution) and a master of syntax and rhetoric, Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi is most famous for this exegesis, *al-Bahr al-Muhit*, which was composed towards the end of his life, in which he explains the linguistic meanings of the Quran. The work is extraordinarily rich in non-canonical *qir'at* or variant readings of the Quran, some of which were not contained in prior commentaries. It is also replete with syntax and rhetoric, placing special emphasis on investigating the

words of every verse, the difference in structure, and the points of eloquence.

IBN JUZAY AL-KALBI'S TASHIL LI 'ULUM AL-TANZIL

Author: Muhammad Ibn Juzay al-Kalbi al-Gharnati
 School of Jurisprudence: Maliki
 Year of Death: 741 AH
 Volumes: 2 volumes

From the Arab tribe of Kalb, Ibn Juzay hailed from Granada in Andalusia, Spain. He wrote widely on all the sciences of his day: hadith, fiqh, Quranic recitations and tafsir. He was noted for this Sufic exegesis, *Tashil fi 'ulum al-tanzil*, and his commentary which contains fine spiritual points to benefit the soul. He died as a martyr (*shahid*) fighting in the Battle of Tarif in the year 741 AH, may Allah be pleased with him.

TAFSIR AL-KHAZIN

Author: 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Khazin
 School of Jurisprudence: Shafi'i
 Year of Death: 741 AH
 Volumes: 3 volumes

Imam al-Khazin hailed from Baghdad and the full name of his tafsir is *Lubab al-ta'wil fi ma 'ani al-tanzil*. Considered by some to be a refinement of *Tafsir al-Baghawi*, this tafsir highlights both general and specific themes in the Quran, linguistic points of benefit, the reasons for revelation, as well as the virtues of the suras—all relying upon the authentic *ahadith* and reports of the Pious Forbears (*Salaf*) with references. It also includes proofs from Arabic poetry and the Arabic language.

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SHAYKH MUHAMMAD `ALI AL-SABUNI is one of the leading scholars of Sunni Islam in the modern era. A specialist in the knowledge of *Tafsir* (Exegesis of the Holy Qur'an), he has authored one of the most widely accepted *Tafsirs* of the Qur'an entitled *Safwat al-Tafasir* (The Choicest Selections from the Books of Exegesis). Since its publication in 1978 and with more depth than the renowned *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Safwat al-Tafasir* has quickly become the celebrated *Tafsir* for beginners. It is recommended in Islamic Seminaries worldwide as a reliable reference point to acquire the orthodox Sunni understanding of the Qur'an.

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Chief Justice of Saudi Arabia and Imam of the Grand Mosque of Mecca

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—SHAYKH ABU'L-HASAN `ALI AL-NADWI
President of Darul 'Uloom Nadwat'l-'Ulama' in Lucknow, India